

REMARKS

1. Claims 34 and 35 are objected to under 37 CFR 1.75.

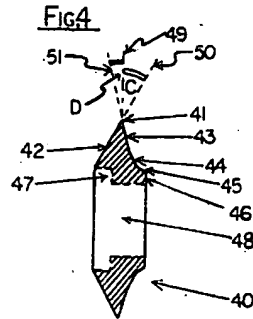
Claim 34 has been cancelled. Consequently, applicant respectfully requests this objection be withdrawn.

3. Claims 33-35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,733,472 ("Belcourt").

Claim 34 has been canceled. Consequently, applicant respectfully requests this rejection be withdrawn with respect to claim 34.

In the Office Action of 28 August 2006, the Examiner indicates that the cutting edge of Belcourt's FIG.4 is symmetrical in a cross-sectional plane extending perpendicularly between the first and second lateral side surfaces and through the axis (41, the entire blade may not be symmetrical but the circular cutting edge is)". Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's characterization of the reference and the rejection based thereon.

Belcourt discloses a can opener blade 9 mountable on the shaft 32 of a commercial can opener. A spring 33 is disposed between one side of the blade 9, and a shaft support 31. A screw 35, disposed on the opposite side of the blade 9, retains the blade 9 on the shaft 32. FIG. 4 is described as a commercial can opener blade, having an edge 41 formed by slanted sides 42 and 43. Slanted side 43 "leads to outward slanted side 44 which is extended by still further outward slanted support side 45, the latter being terminated by support region 46". (Col. 2, lines 48-53). An extension of side 42 forms an imaginary angle C with an axial centerline 49, and an extension of side 43 forms an imaginary angle D with the axial centerline. Angle C is disclosed as being about 30 degrees, and angle D is disclosed as being about 15 degrees. (Col. 2, lines 45-63)



Consequently, the edge 41 formed by sides 42 and 43 is clearly not symmetrical about the axial centerline 49 of the can opener blade, and side 43 does not terminate at the lateral side surface of support region 46.

Belcourt Does Not Anticipate the Rotary Cutter of Claims 33 and 35:

The hand-held rotary cutters of claims 33 and 35 of the present application each recite a circular cutting blade and a handle. The circular cutting blade includes an axis, an axial centerline perpendicular to the axis, and a cutting edge defined by a first edge surface and a second edge surface. The first edge surface extends between a first lateral side and the second edge surface, and the second edge surface extends between the second lateral side and the first edge surface. The cutting edge includes an edge angle defined by the first and second edge surfaces that is not less than forty degrees and not greater than fifty degrees, and the diameter of the cutting blade is not greater than fifteen times the maximum thickness of the blade.

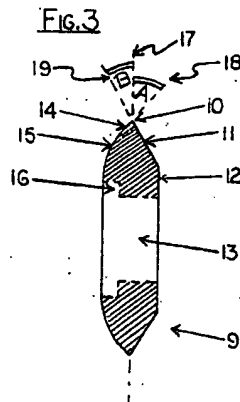
Claims 33 and 35 have been amended for clarification purposes to recite that the cutting edge is symmetrical about the axial centerline in a cross-sectional plane extending perpendicularly between the first and second lateral side surfaces and through the axis. FIG. 4 of the present application has been amended to show the axial centerline which was included in the original informal drawings, and inadvertently omitted in the formal drawings. For at least this reason, the amendments to claims 33 and 35 do not include any new matter.

a.) Belcourt Does not Disclose a Cutting Blade Symmetrical About its Axial Centerline

Belcourt does not disclose or suggest a circular cutting blade having a cutting edge that is symmetrical about the axial centerline in a cross-sectional plane extending

perpendicularly between the first and second lateral side surfaces and through the axis, as is recited in claims 33 and 35.

Belcourt discloses two unsymmetrical blade geometries. As stated above, the blade embodiment shown in FIG. 4 of Belcourt has an edge 41 formed by sides 42 and 43, which edge 41 is clearly not symmetrical about the axial centerline 49 of the can opener blade. The blade embodiment shown in FIG. 3 of Belcourt has an edge 10 formed by straight side 11 and index side 14, which index side 14 includes a curved portion 15. Centerline 17 extends between the straight side 11 and the index side 14.



Clearly, the edge 10 formed by sides 11 and 14 is not symmetrical about the axial centerline 17 of the can opener blade embodiment shown in FIG. 3.

The symmetrical blade geometry of the present rotary cutter facilitates use of the cutter in an unguided, multi-directional manner, and thereby increases the utility of the cutter. The rotary cutter operates the same for left turns and right turns at least in part because the cutting blade edge is symmetrical. The ability to make continuous cuts with the cutter in detailed patterns, and thereby eliminate starting and stopping cut points in the product and errors/blemishes associated therewith, is a distinct advantage.

b.) Belcourt's FIG. 4 Embodiment Does Not Include an Edge Side 43 that Extends between the Opposite Edge Side and the Lateral Side Surface of the Blade.

Claims 33 and 35 recite a cutting edge defined by a first edge surface and a second edge surface. The first edge surface extends between the first lateral side and the second edge surface, and the second edge surface extends between the second lateral side and the first edge surface.

FIG. 4 of Belcourt is described as a commercial can opener blade, having an edge 41 formed by slanted sides 42 and 43. Slanted side 43 “leads to outward slanted side 44 which is extended by still further outward slanted support side 45, the latter being terminated by support region 46”. (Col. 2, lines 48-53). Consequently, the cutting blade edge geometry disclosed in FIG. 4 of Belcourt does not anticipate the cutting blade edge geometry recited in claims 33 and 35.

c.) The Can Opener Blade of Belcourt is Mounted to Follow Along the Edge of a Can.

Belcourt discloses a can opener blade for use with commercially available can openers. (Col. 1, lines 1-5) The only mounting structure disclosed by Belcourt is the shaft 32, spring 33, shaft support 31, and screw 35 assembly shown in FIG. 5. Belcourt describes, however, that the can opener blade allows a cut through can tops, including “around the relatively sharp corners of square or rectangular designed can tops”. (Col. 1, lines 20-23) Belcourt describes further that the blade mounting shown in FIG. 5 has a certain degree of “flexibility of the blade [that] enables the blade [sic] to more readily maneuver along the lip of a can and around corners”. In short, Belcourt describes a can opener blade that follows along the edge of a can to cut the top of the can at the rim. There is no disclosure of a cutting blade mounted on a handle in a manner that permits the rotary cutter to follow unguided, multi-directional patterns across the thin sheet material (claim 33), or a handle that is operable to permit the cutting blade to be manually maneuvered in a directionally unrestricted manner across thin sheet material (claim 35). In fact, the “flexible” mounting shown in FIG. 5 of Belcourt would be difficult to control if it were to be mounted on a handle that permitted directionally unrestricted manual maneuvering.

As stated above, ability of the present rotary cutter facilitates to cut in an unguided, multi-directional manner increases the utility of the cutter. The handle and mounted rotary cutting blade are not constrained to follow the edge of any work piece, and are free to follow whatever pattern is desired.

For at least these reasons, applicants respectfully submit that the rotary cutter of claims 33 and 35 is patentable over and not anticipated by Belcourt.

5. Claim 13 is rejected under 35 USC 1-3(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4, 205,438 in view of U.S. Patent Nos. 1,775,380, 4,733,472, 5,758,426, and 5,171,106.

Claim 13 has been cancelled. Applicants respectfully request this rejection be withdrawn.

As applicants have traversed the objection and rejections raised by the Examiner, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw the stated objection and rejections, allow claims 33 and 35, and pass the present application on to issuance. Applicants include herewith a check in the amount of \$ 395.00 for: a) the RCE fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.17(e). In the event any additional fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 50-3381.

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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